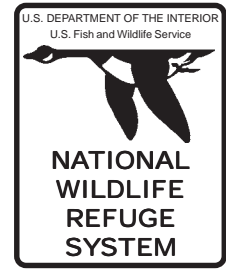


News Release

National Wildlife Refuge System



Maui National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Post Office Box 1042, Kihei, Hawaii 96753

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Kealia Coastal Boardwalk Construction Set to Begin

If patience is a virtue, the people of Maui have been very, very good. And now they're asked to prove their patience just a little bit more, as construction of the long-awaited Kealia Coastal Boardwalk (hopefully) begins next week.

"Planning for the boardwalk has been underway for about 8 years now," said Kealia Pond National Wildlife Refuge manager Glynnis Nakai. "This partnership effort has endured many setbacks and delays, but with a little cooperation from Mother Nature, construction should actually begin on Monday, August 9."

Although the contractor, Central Construction, Inc. of Kahului, was able to drive some test piles into the ground last December, construction was halted from January through July during nesting season for the endangered Hawaiian stilt and Hawaiian coot. Construction of the 2,200-foot elevated boardwalk at Ma'alaea Flats is expected to take about four months.

A temporary fence has been installed at the planned parking area where the boardwalk will begin. The area will be used by the contractor during the construction period. Occasional traffic delays along North Kihei Road may occur but are expected to be minor.

"We ask that beachgoers stay away from the construction zone for their own safety," Nakai said. "However, they can access the beach through the newly replaced wooden dune fence at two points just east of the construction area. Limited roadside parking is available in that area."

Initially scheduled to start on August 1, the one-week delay was caused by unusually high water conditions. Nakai explained that the wet winter delivered and maintained high water in the flats which, in previous years, have dried by mid-June. The rains this week could further hamper the work schedule.

The construction will begin with driving piles with a crane similar to the one used in December to test the piles. "Although we expect some noise associated with the pile driving, it should be minimal, as we heard in December," Nakai said.

The boardwalk decking and handrails will be constructed with recycled material provided by Aloha Plastics, Inc. A total of 1.5 million milk jugs are the raw material for the project. "I hope everyone is drinking *lots* of milk and recycling their jugs at the County's recycling centers throughout the island!" said Nakai.

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The Kealia Coastal Boardwalk project is being managed by the Central Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highways Administration. Important partners include the Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary; Tri-Isle Resource, Conservation and Development; State of Hawaii; Maui County; Alexander and Baldwin Inc.; Alexander and Baldwin Foundation; Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation; Warren and Rose Gummow family; Dale Zarella; Ma‘alaea Community Association; Ducks Unlimited, Inc.; Kihei Canoe Club; Kiwanis Club of Kihei-Wailea; Hawaiian Electric Industries Charitable Foundation; Mauna Kea Hiking Club; Maui Electric Company; and the Community Work Day Program.